CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A system for a distributed build comprising:

a first computer maintaining a list of jobs, each of said jobs having an operation associated with creation of an installed software image;

a second computer accepting one of the jobs from the first computer and executing the accepted job by performing the operation associated therewith.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein the second computer configures the installed software image.

3. The system of claim 1, wherein the second computer delivers the installed software image to the first computer.

4. The system of claim 1, wherein the operation comprises installing, configuring, and imaging the software image.

5. The system of claim 1, further comprising a master computer through which the second computer accepts one of the jobs from the first computer.

6. A method in a distributed build environment in which one or more first computers delegate creation of a software image to a second computer, said method performed by the second computer comprising:

accepting a job from one of the first computers, said job having an operation associated with creation of an installed software image; and

completing the accepted job by performing the operation, wherein the completed job represents the installed software image.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the installed software image is ready for deployment.

8. The method of claim 6, further comprising requesting the job from one of the first computers.

9. The method of claim 6, wherein accepting comprises receiving the job assigned by one of the first computers.

10. The method of claim 6, further comprising configuring the installed software image.

11. The method of claim 6, wherein the second computer executes a minimal operating system.

12. The method of claim 6, wherein accepting comprises:

communicating with each of the first computers in succession to identify a plurality of jobs associated with the first computer; and

selecting a first one of the plurality of jobs identified while communicating.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein each of the first computers stores a list of the jobs in a specific file associated with the first computer, and wherein communicating comprises accessing the specific file on each of the first computers to identify the jobs.

14. The method of claim 12, further comprising determining a status for each of the jobs on each of the first computers by searching for a job status file associated with each of the jobs and stored on the first computer.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the absence of the job status file indicates availability of the job.

16. The method of claim 12, wherein each of the plurality of jobs has a priority corresponding thereto.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein each of the plurality of jobs is organized in a list according to the priority corresponding thereto.

18. The method of claim 6, wherein accepting comprises creating a file associated with a particular job to indicate that the particular job is being completed.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the created file is stored on the second computer.

20. The method of claim 18, further comprising providing credentials to the first computer for authentication during said creating.

21. The method of claim 6, wherein completing comprises executing a script associated with the job.

22. The method of claim 6, further comprising transmitting the installed software image to said one of the first computers from which the job was accepted.

23. The method of claim 6, further comprising downloading instructions for completing the job accepted from said one of the first computers.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein the instructions comprise software components for use in completing the job accepted said one of the first computers.

25. The method of claim 6, wherein the installed software image represents one or more of an operating system and an application program.

26. The method of claim 6, wherein one or more computer-readable media have computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 6.

27. A method in a distributed build environment in which a first computer delegates installation of a software image to one or more second computers, said method performed by the first computer comprising maintaining a list of jobs, each of said jobs being related to creation of an installed software image, wherein each of the second computers selects one or more of the jobs and performs the selected jobs.

28. The method of claim 27, wherein the list comprises jobs selected by the second computers.

29. The method of claim 27, wherein maintaining comprises organizing the jobs in the list according to user input.

30. The method of claim 27, further comprising dynamically creating the list.

31. The method of claim 27, wherein maintaining comprises creating a file defining the list of jobs.

32. The method of claim 27, wherein the list comprises one or more of the following: jobs available for selection, selected jobs, and performed jobs.

33. The method of claim 27, further comprising posting the maintained list as a network resource accessible by the second computers.

34. The method of claim 33, wherein the network resource comprises a storage medium.

35. The method of claim 27, wherein maintaining comprises adding jobs to the list.

36. The method of claim 27, wherein maintaining comprises:

receiving from one of the second computers the created software installation corresponding to one of the jobs selected and performed by the second computer; and

removing the job from the list.

37. The method of claim 36, wherein the received software installation has been configured by the second computer.

38. The method of claim 27, wherein the software installation comprises at least one of an operating system and an application program.

39. The method of claim 27, wherein each of the jobs is completed by only one of the second computers.

40. The method of claim 27, wherein maintaining comprises identifying one or more of the jobs selected by the second computers that fail to be completed within a specific time period.

41. The method of claim 40, wherein maintaining further comprises removing the identified jobs from the list.

42. The method of claim 27, further comprising specifying a time period for the second computers to complete each of the jobs in the list.

43. The method of claim 42, further comprising reclaiming from the second computers one or more of the jobs selected by the second computers if the one or more jobs have not been completed by the second computers within the specific time period.

44. The method of claim 27, wherein one or more computer-readable media have computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 27.

45. A data structure in a distributed build environment in which a first computer delegates creation of an installed software image to a second computer, said data structure representing a status associated with installation of the software image, said data structure comprising:

an identifier associated with the second computer; and

a descriptor indicating the status of the installation performed by the second computer as identified by the identifier.

46. The data structure of claim 45, wherein the data structure is stored on the first computer.

47. The data structure of claim 45, wherein the installed software image comprises one or more of an operating system and an application program.

48. The data structure of claim 45, wherein the descriptor indicates a completion status of the installation.

49. The data structure of claim 45, wherein the second computer configures the installed software image.

50. The data structure of claim 45, wherein the first computer accesses the data structure to determine the status.

51. The data structure of claim 45, further comprising:

a server path associated with the first computer; and

a credential associated with the identifier and the server path for authentication during communication between the first computer and second computer, wherein the second computer communicates with the first computer via the identifier, credential, and server path to indicate to the first computer that the second computer is performing operations associated with the installation.

52. The data structure of claim 51, wherein the server path comprises a network address.

53. The data structure of claim 51, wherein the server path and credential are stored on the second computer.

54. A data structure in a distributed build environment in which a first computer delegates creation of an installed software image to a second computer, said data structure being stored on the first computer, said data structure representing one or more jobs, said data structure comprising:

a job identifier associated with each of the jobs; and

a script defining a plurality of operations associated with the job identifier to be performed by the second computer to create an installed software image.

55. The data structure of claim 54, wherein each of the jobs has a priority corresponding thereto, and wherein each of the jobs is organized in the data structure according to the priority corresponding thereto.

56. The data structure of claim 54, wherein the script further defines operations to configure the installed software image.

57. A system for a distributed build in which a first computer delegates creation of an installed software image to a second computer, said system comprising:

a list means for the first computer to maintain a list of jobs, each of said jobs being related to creation of an installed software image;

an interface means for the second computer to accept one of the jobs maintained by the first computer via the list means, said job having an operation associated with the creation of an installed software image; and

an install means for the second computer to complete the job accepted via the interface means by performing the operation, wherein the completed job represents the installed software image.

58. The system of claim 57, further comprising means for the second computer to configure the installed software image.